

Honorable Chairman & members of the committee, my name is Becky Stockton & I reside in Helena, MT.

I come before you today to support HB 421, Montana Clean Government Act. I believe that anytime a government agency, councils, elected officials & etc. is supporting or opposing an initiative or political candidate, it is important for the citizens of Montana to know if their taxpaying money is being used in such a matter.

An example where transparency & overseeing was not done was the financial bailout. Politicians took money from FannieMae & FreddieMac for political gain & did not oversee their practices and as a result it put our U.S. Treasury at risk & now as a taxpayer I have to bail them out! This not only affects me, but it also affects my children & grandchildren & burdens them to pay this debt off.

Another example is what happened regarding Prop. 8 in California, the California teacher union put in \$1,000,000 dollars to defeat the measure. Thousands of public school teachers were upset because their hard earned money for dues was being used for something they did not think it was in the best interests for the their teacher's union to oppose or get involved in or they did not morally support or oppose the initiative.

HB 421 will provide transparency & accountability by requiring no-bid contracts to be published on the internet for the public to see where their money is being spent. I am all for transparency & if our US Senator, John Tester was here today, I would think he would be in support of this bill because on Monday, January 8, 2007, our US Senator Tester voiced his support for the Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act of 2007, a sweeping ethics reform bill for our US Congress. (I quote), "This bill addresses the concerns I heard across the state of Montana for more than a year," Tester said. "People want more transparency in government and they want their government to work for them, not corporate lobbyists.

"Senator Tester has already put into place his own stringent ethics policy for himself and for his staff. That policy includes publicly posting all of the Senator's meetings, including those with lobbyists, and requires all members of Tester's office to refuse gifts, meals and travel from lobbyists. " He set up an internet web site to that effect.

This initiative process is an important tool to be used by the voters of Montana & we need to ensure there is integrity in the process & this bill addresses this. Please support HB 421 to protect the political & initiative process for the citizens of this state.

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